

THE CALIFORNIA SELF-DETERMINATION PILOT PROJECTS

The intent of self-determination is to facilitate consumer and family control of public funds such that they have the freedom to develop and purchase their own services.

SUPPORT BROKER

General Definition: A support broker is the individual or agency who arranges for the specific services and supports a consumer and/or family needs. The broker acts on behalf of the consumer as his and her personal "agent" to arrange these services and supports. The broker helps define the needs and life dreams, provides information about resources, identifies potential providers (regardless of funding source), arranges contracts for services, and evaluates the effectiveness of the services and supports. One of the key principles of self-determination is the shifting of power and control from the funding agency to the consumer. Ideally, to avoid a conflict of interest, the broker should not be a provider of direct services nor should he or she have fiscal responsibilities, e.g., allocation of funds, bill payment, etc. If one organization performs both functions, great care must be taken to delineate staff roles and to provide ongoing training to instill the central precepts of self-determination, independence, service coordination, case management, fiscal intermediary, and service broker.

Examples from Other States

1. New Hampshire - Local Nonprofit Agency

New Hampshire case managers use local nonprofit agencies that provide service coordination combined with support brokerage to assist consumers to purchase services. The service coordinator/support broker functions independently of the service providers. One of the purchased services is the development of the Individual Program Plan, including the authority to fund services. On behalf of a consumer and/or family, the service coordinator/support broker negotiates rates and specific hours of service with service providers. If a consumer and/or family's needs change, some of the budgeted funds can be used to rework the plan by purchasing additional services of the service coordinator/support broker. New Hampshire finds that this combination works best for individuals who want a high level of control.

A second model being used in New Hampshire is to designate a state department staff person to be the case manager and service coordinator/support broker. This is working best for individuals who want services considered to be more "traditional."

New Hampshire is finding it worthwhile to use different models, combining planning, brokering, and service coordination, to truly meet each consumer's needs. Their concept behind self-determination is: "listen to what is being asked for and figure out how to make it happen." [For more information, visit Internet web site <http://www.selfdetermination.org>.]

2. Oregon - Consumer-Directed Support Brokerage

Oregon uses Self-Determination Resources, Inc. (SDRI), a tax exempt, nonprofit organization, to broker services and supports. SDRI was incorporated specifically to act as the support broker. The SDRI board of directors is entirely composed of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members. In addition to support brokering, the responsibilities of the SDRI include: person-centered planning, consumer education, technical assistance, community development, quality monitoring, fiscal intermediary, and administrative employment supports. [For more information, visit Internet web site <http://www.selfdetermination.org>.]